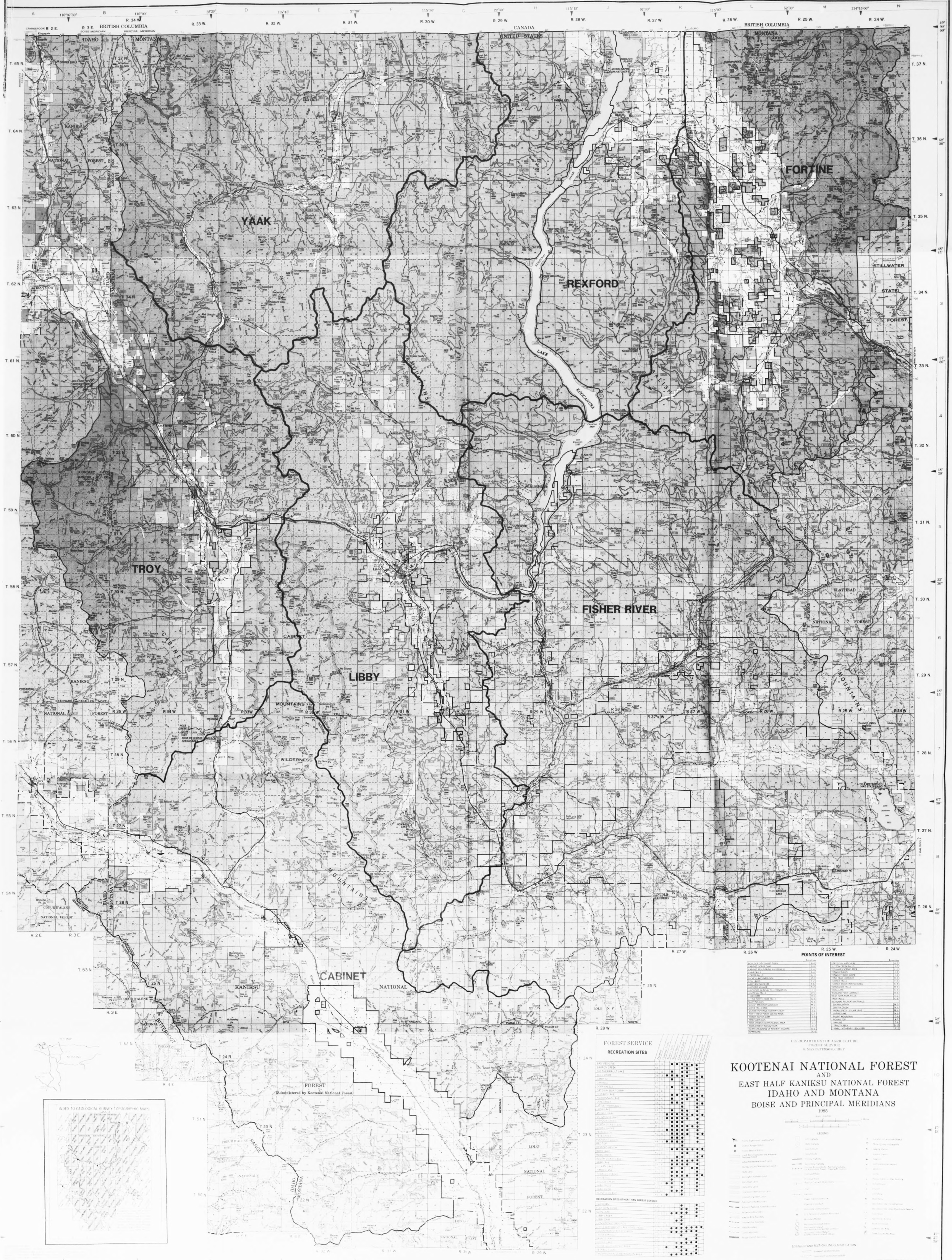


POINTS OF INTEREST

	Location
BOULDER CITY GHOST TOWN	R 4
CABINET GORGE DAM	E 6
CABINET MOUNTAINS WILDERNESS	E 6
CHAR FALLS	A 6
COPPER FALLS	A 1
DICKEY LAKE OVERLOOK	D 2
FISH LAKES	F 2
HERITAGE MUSEUM	E 6
HISTORIC VILLAGE	E 1
HOODOOS, GLACIAL TILL FORMATION	E 1
KOOTENAI FALLS	A 1
LIBBY DAM	G 5
LITTLE NORTH FORK FALLS	G 2
MARTIN FALLS	N 4
MOUNT MARSTON LOOKOUT	M 2
MOYIE FALLS DAM	A 1
MURRAY SPRINGS FISH HATCHERY	F 1
NORTHWEST PEAK SCENIC AREA	E 1
NOXON RAPIDS DAM	E 9
PINKHAM FALLS	F 2
ROSS CREEK CEDARS SCENIC AREA	E 2
ROSS CREEK FALLS & VISTA	E 2
SETTLERS GROVE OF ANCIENT CEDARS	D 1
SPAR LAKE	C 6

	Location
STATE FISH HATCHERY	A 1
SUTTON CREEK FALLS	F 1
TEN LAKES SCENIC AREA	F 1
TENMILE FALLS	J 4
TENMILE TALUS SLOPE	J 4
TONY PEAK LOOKOUT	H 5
TURNER FALLS	F 2
TURNER MOUNTAIN SKI AREA	F 2
UMBRELLA FALLS	E 2
VINAL LAKE	F 2
WARLAND PEAK LOOKOUT	A 5
WEST FORK YAAK FALLS	F 1
YAAK FALLS	A 1
NATIONAL RECREATION TRAILS	
E.H. MOUNTAIN	M 3
GRIFFIN CREEK	N 5
INGALLS MTN. SYLVIA LAKE	M 5
LILYPAD LAKE	N 5
PULPIT MOUNTAIN	D 4
ROUND TOP	A 1
SKYLINE	D 4
TROUT CREEK	D 10
VINAL - MT HENRY - BOULDER	F 2

FOREST SERVICE
RECREATION SITES

	Vacation Cabin	Visitor Center	Picnic Area	Developed Camp	Boat Launch	Swimming	Campground	Trailhead Facilities
BAD MEDICINE								
BARRON CREEK								
BIG THERIAULT LAKE								
BULL RIVER								
CAMP 32								
CAMP 39								
DARK CREEK								
DARK CREEK BOAT CAMP								
HOWARD LAKE								
KILBRENNAN LAKE								
LAKE CREEK								
LITTLE THERIAULT								
LUDLOW LAKE								
MT. SILCOX								
MT. WILLIAM LAKE								
MEADOW CREEK								
NORTHERN KEY LAKE								
PEACE LAKE								
PETE CREEK								
PLEASANT VALLEY								
RED TOP								
REXFORD BENCH								
ROCK LAKE								
ROSS CREEK								
SOUTH DICKEY LAKE								
SPAR LAKE								
TEN LAKES								
TIMBER CAMP								
TOBACCO PLAINS								
TURNER								
WARLAND								
YAAK FALLS								
YAAK RIVER								
YAHK CAMP								

RECREATION SITES OTHER THAN FOREST SERVICE

	Vacation Cabin	Visitor Center	Picnic Area	Developed Camp	Boat Launch	Swimming	Campground	Trailhead Facilities
ARMSTRONG								
BIG ROCK RIDGE								
BULL LAKE								
LIBBY CREEK								
LIBBY LAKE								
LOON PICNIC GROUNDS								
LITTLE THERIAULT STATE PARK								
LUBAU CREEK STATE PARK								
MARBLE CREEK								
PEACE LAKE								
PLEASANT VALLEY SCENIC AREA								
STEAMBOAT LAKE								
TIMBERLAND RESTAURANT								

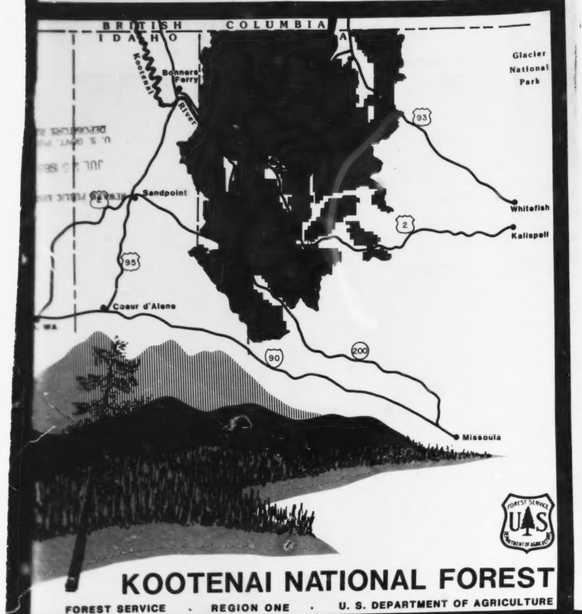
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
FOREST SERVICE
R. MAX PETERSON, CHIEF

KOOTENAI NATIONAL FOREST
AND
EAST HALF KANIKSU NATIONAL FOREST
IDAHO AND MONTANA
BOISE AND PRINCIPAL MERIDIANS
1985

LEGEND

TOWNSHIP AND SECTION LINE CLASSIFICATION

INDEX TO GEOLOGICAL SURVEY TOPOGRAPHIC MAPS



KOOTENAI NATIONAL FOREST

FOREST SERVICE · REGION ONE · U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

THE FOREST

The Kootenai National Forest is a big land of many contrasts. Forest boundaries encompass over 2¼ million acres of National Forest. In this 75 by 100 mile area, the terrain ranges from 8,712 feet atop Snowshoe Peak to 1,862 feet where the Kootenai River leaves the Forest and the State, the lowest point in Montana.

The forces of nature have long been at work on this land, creating its present day appearance. Ripple marks of water on sand have been preserved in rocks found high in the mountains, indicating that oceans once stretched from horizon to horizon. In more recent times, glaciers spent themselves grinding the landscape. The highest, most rugged mountains of the Forest were shaped by alpine glaciers which flowed down from the peaks to carve the U-shaped valleys along the western Forest boundary, in the Cabinet Mountains, and in the Ten Lakes Area.

Often these small glaciers were met at lower elevations by the great sheets of continental ice which slowly swept the Forest in flows as much as 4,000 feet thick. Northward retreating masses ground the sharp edges off much of the countryside and deposited the rubble in valley bottoms. This accounts for the more subdued terrain we see today over much of the Forest.

The erosive forces of wind, water, and ice are still active. They are most obvious in the many streams and rivers on the Kootenai.

Most of the Forest is drained by the Kootenai River, born in the glacier fields of British Columbia. The Kootenai flows 98 miles across Montana through the Forest to become an important tributary of the Columbia River. The river enters the Forest with an average annual waterflow of 9,993 cubic feet per second and leaves after gaining 3,284 cubic feet per second of water from Forest streams and rivers.

Waters of the southwest portion of the Forest flow into the high walled valley of the Clark Fork of the Columbia River. The two dams along the Clark Fork forming Noxon reservoir and Cabinet Gorge reservoir in addition to Libby Dam and Lake Koocanusa on the Kootenai River are important hydroelectric suppliers for the Northwest.

Most of the Kootenai Forest is influenced by mild, wet, coastal weather which penetrates inland during fall, winter, and spring. Summer usually brings prolonged periods of sunshine, with occasional storms across the high mountains.

Abundant moisture, falling on the thick soils deposited by glaciers over much of the Forest, creates conditions very favorable for plant life. Ranging from cactus to groves of large western red cedar and hemlock in many stream bottoms, plants of some form grow on nearly every acre of the Forest. Trees, in many respects the most important form of plantlife, are a familiar part of the Kootenai landscape. Elevation, aspect, moisture, and light vary widely across the Forest, enabling 15 species of conifers to grow and reproduce.

These trees are an important resource of the people living in the valleys of the Kootenai National Forest. There are several mills that use trees from National Forest lands to produce lumber, plywood, and other wood products. Lumbering is the largest employer in both Lincoln and Sanders Counties, and an added local benefit are the timber sale receipt dollars returned to the Counties from National Forest lands.

Minerals are also a significant part of the local economics. A few hardy trappers and explorers, such as David Thompson, were the first non-native visitors to the area in the 1800's, but the settlement of the area began with the discovery of gold in Libby Creek in 1860. More recent discoveries of copper and silver have resulted in large scale operations such as the Troy mine on Mt. Vernon.

The transportation of these goods across the Forest began with wagon roads in the 1880's and completion of the railroad through Libby in 1892. For a short time around the turn of the century steamboats plied the Kootenai and Forest streams have also been used for driving logs to down stream mills. Trees are now transported by truck and railway.

Some Forest roads are used only temporarily for harvesting and managing the trees and then closed to reduce erosion and protect wildlife habitat. This form of road management saves tax dollars and provides areas for hiking, horseback riding, and hunting.

The Kootenai is known for its abundant wildlife. Eagle, osprey and owl, bobcat, lynx, and lion; whitetail, mule deer and elk; ducks, geese; mountain goat and bighorn sheep -- the list is long and varied. Management of habitat for these animals, especially big game species, is an important activity on the Forest, and is a consideration in other activities, such as timber harvest and the use of fire. Domestic livestock also benefit from vegetative management, allowing the Forest to be used for grazing in several areas.

Information regarding our many resource activities and recreation opportunities is available from the District Ranger offices located throughout the Kootenai National Forest. Each office has a **Recreation Opportunity Guide** (ROG) - a handbook listing the wide variety of recreation opportunities available and their locations on the Forest. Each sheet in the Guide describes the route to the area and other information visitors will want to know. You are welcome to copies of the sheets about your area of interest. Contact the receptionist at any Forest office.

KOOTENAI NATIONAL FOREST
Supervisor's Office
506 U.S. Highway 2 West
Libby, Montana 59923
(406)293-6211

EUREKA RANGER STATION
Rexford Ranger District
P.O. Box 666
Eureka, Montana 59917
(406)296-2536

SYLVANITE RANGER STATION
Yaak Ranger District
Route 1
Troy, Montana 59935
(406)295-4717

MURPHY LAKE RANGER STATION
Fortine Ranger District
P.O. Box 116
Fortine, Montana 59918
(406)882-4451

TROY RANGER STATION
Troy Ranger District
1437 North Highway 2
Troy, Montana 59935
(406)295-4693

LIBBY RANGER STATION
Libby Ranger District
1263 Highway 37 North
Libby, Montana 59923
(406) 293-7741

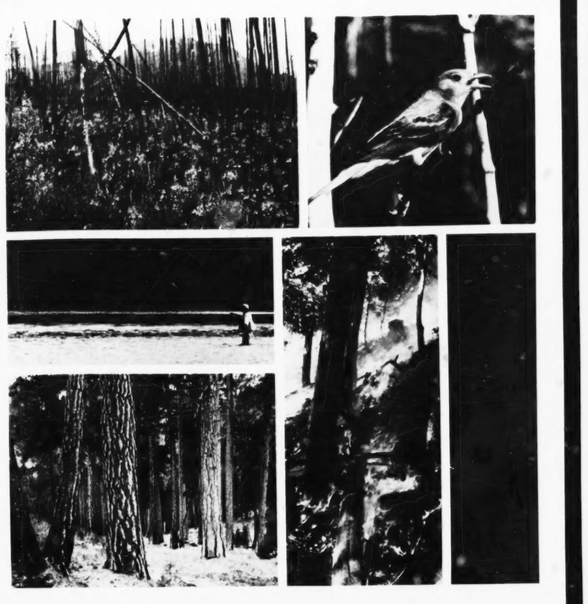
CANOE GULCH RANGER STATION
Fisher River Ranger District
12557 Highway 37 North
Libby, Montana 59923
(406)293-7773

CABINET RANGER STATION
Cabinet Ranger District
HCR2, Box 210
Trout Creek, Montana 59874
(406)847-2462

ponderosa pine

Douglas-fir

western larch



SUMMER

As streams recede, roads dry out, and everything becomes green again, thoughts turn to camping and picnicking across the Forest. Besides the many developed campgrounds (they are shown on the map with a tepee symbol), the Forest offers a variety of places to enjoy the environment – from "wide spots" in the road for picnicking near streams, to "hike in" mountain meadow camps. With just a few exceptions you can camp anywhere on National Forest lands up to 14 days. A list of National Forest recreation sites and their facilities is shown on the map side. Most of the major access roads on the Forest parallel streams for much of their route, and the zone between road and stream can offer an afternoon of whatever you're looking for – just studying plants or birds, looking for mushrooms, fishing for pan-sized trout, picking berries, or perhaps sitting on a log listening to the water. Many elements of the Forest come together here along the streams – a great place for a visit.

In addition to many of the lakes on the Forest, there are a few streams which may be floated in early to mid summer. The remaining free-flowing stretch of the Kootenai may be drifted by the experienced floater in areas above the falls area and below it to Idaho. The Clark Fork is mostly reservoir slack water as it traverses the Forest, but the middle reaches of the Yaak and Bull Rivers are usually navigable by the knowledgeable floater. Although the water is never warm, some of the larger streams may also be braved in inner tubes. Remember that much of the land along these streams is private.

Fishing is usually best in June and July on lakes and streams. Flies or small spinners will often produce catches in nearly any lake, and streams like the Yaak, Fisher, Kootenai, Vermilion, and Bull Rivers, and Lake, Pipe, Libby, Bear, Grave, and Sunday Creeks, to name a few.

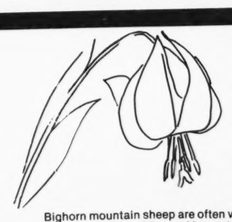
High country lakes are also the focus of hikers and fishermen in the summer. While the Cabinet Mountains Wilderness receives a high proportion of this use, there are many other quality areas on the Forest offering scenery, hiking, and a place to fish, often with fewer people. A partial list would include the Vermilion and upper Fisher Rivers, the western Cabinet Mountains from the Clark Fork to the Kootenai, the northwest part of the Yaak country, and the northeast corner of the Forest in and around the Ten Lakes Scenic Area. Robinson Mountain and the Mt. Henry area are also good places to get away from it all, as is much of the state line country in the Trout Creek-Beaver Creek areas. The map side shows recreation trails across the Forest and the road access to them.

A map and brochure of the Cabinet Mountains Wilderness is available and will help you plan a visit to this area. By June, on into July, and even August, the high country flowers are blooming and providing delicate beauty to meadow, forest, and rock ledge. A wild flower collection made over one season in just the Cabinet Mountains includes over 135 identified species. Perhaps the best place to find variety is in areas of shallow, rocky soils with few trees and/or other competitive vegetation.

Often such open areas have burned in the past. One of the familiar plants that favors old burns is huckleberry. The Kootenai is known for its fine berry patches; not only huckleberry, but juneberry, raspberry, Oregon grape, thimbleberry, black raspberry, and currant. Usually in late August through September, the Forest berry patches are invaded by people, bears, and birds. While the same huckleberry patch may vary from year to year, the serious picker can usually find more than enough berries, if not on the mid slopes of the southern end of the Cabinets, many of the Clark Fork tributaries, or the Yaak, then almost certainly in some shady higher basin in the mountains.

As berry bushes and other plants dry out in late summer, the danger of fire increases with every rainless day. Although the role of fire is now more clearly understood, and the capability for managing it is much improved, fire still poses a real threat to many Forest resources. Summer storms and their lightning are beyond man's control, but we can prevent wildfires caused by the careless smoker, the unattended campfire, or burning brush on windy days.

SPRING



A time of flowers blooming, streams running high, and varied thrush making announcements from the tops of tallest trees. A time when people are wondering what to do with extra hours of daylight.

To the fisherman it means ice is soft and unsafe on lakes, and the big river is perhaps the only place to fish, even though insect hatches have not really begun. In many tributaries the spawning runs begin now, and the gravels of streams feeding the two rivers and reservoirs serve as important resources. Most streams and lakes of the Forest harbor fish, usually trout, and seasons and regulations for fishing them are set by the State Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks.

Usually the first lakes to be ice free for recreation use are those low elevation areas such as Thompson Lakes, Bull Lake, and a few others.

The high lakes, and indeed most of the high country, are snow and ice covered until late spring. Often the hardy cross-country skier can be skiing the high basins of the Cabinet Mountains and the Ten Lakes and Northwest Peak Scenic areas through sunny days in May while gardens are being planted in the valley.

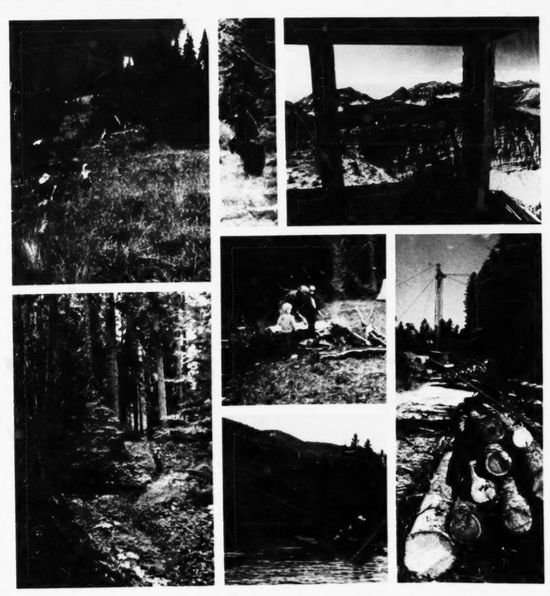
Down in the valley bottoms, hungry bears are searching for new grasses, and those birds and mammals that have spent the winter on the Forest are now regaining energy lost in winter's cold and snow. This is a critical time for deer and elk, for they need an abundance of food, and the quest for it often carries them down near man where they are vulnerable to man-caused stress such as off road vehicles and dogs.

Spring is usually the best time for viewing and photographing wildlife on the Kootenai.

Bighorn mountain sheep are often visible on the south slopes of Berray Mountain in the Bull River Valley, in addition to the Kootenai Falls herd and a smaller group along Koocanusa reservoir near Sheep Creek. Deer and elk can be seen in the spring in these same areas, as well as the lower Fisher River, Wolf Creek, Pleasant Valley, and areas along the Clark Fork River.

With the exception of low elevation southern exposures, nearly all of the Forest is blanketed with snow most winters. As this snow melts, and the ground beneath thaws, movement begins. Not only surface water moves, but soils, rocks, and the very trees themselves. During this spring "breakup" driving on many of the soft native-surface roads can cause considerable damage to the road.

As snowbanks disappear and long days of sunshine begin warming the soil, the valley bottoms and lower slopes come alive with a variety of wild flowers. Usually first are the buttercups of field and open woods, followed closely by glacier lilies and shooting stars. After these first early blossoms, a continuous progression of colorful flowers offers itself to the photographer and traveler in Forest valleys. Picking these flowers is lawful on most Forest lands; however, many species will be less numerous the next season if picked.



POINTS OF INTEREST

Northwest Peak Scenic Area (Map Location A-3) - Rugged peaks and alpine lakes along Canadian border.

Yaak Falls (C-3) - Several falls at head of scenic river canyon.

Ten Lakes Scenic Area (A-11) - Several alpine basins with lakes and family trails.

Mt. Marston (B-12) - Highest point around with vehicle access -- views of Glacier Park.

Turner Mountain (D-5) - Downhill ski area with T-bar and rope tow.

Libby Dam and Reservoir (E-8) - Dam with visitor center and auditorium, 90-mile long lake Koocanusa with several developed recreation sites and many water-oriented recreation opportunities.

Kootenai Falls (E-4) - Major waterfalls with suspension footbridge and views of bighorn sheep range.

Swede Mountain (F-7) - Lookout accessible in summer with views of Libby valley and Cabinet Mountains.

Ross Creek (G-3) - Scenic grove of giant cedars, self-guided nature trail, picnic area, vista point, and camping at nearby Bull Lake.

Cabinet Mountains Wilderness (G-5) - 95,000 acres of alpine ridges and lakes, with many miles of trail. See separate brochure.

Bull River Valley (G-4) - Beautiful scenery along highway between two crests of Cabinet Mountains.

REMINDERS

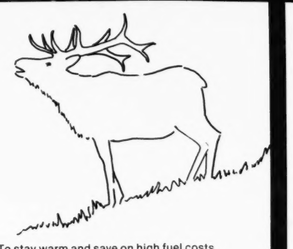
Road Access Maps for each Ranger District are available free at all Forest Service offices on the Kootenai National Forest. These maps will assist you in accessing National Forest lands. Most of the roads are open year round to all use while some are restricted part or all of the year.

Use care when driving Forest Roads -- most are one lane with turnouts, may have heavy logging traffic at times, and can be especially hazardous in winter.

Be extra careful with fire, and always have a shovel and bucket when building a campfire during fire season unless you're at a developed recreation site such as a campground.

Fish and game laws and regulations are administered by the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks. Lands that are not National Forest may have different rules concerning their use.

FALL



When asked to pick a favorite season on the Forest, many people will probably speak most highly of fall; the golden larch lighting the hillside, the cool nights, hunting season, and frosty mornings with ducks flying out of the river mist.

The photographer usually runs out of film before subjects -- scenes of yellow cottonwoods reflected in beaver ponds, multicolored brush slopes of high basins punctuated with the dark spires of subalpine fir, the many reds of huckleberry bush beneath the columns of lodgepole, and of course, the larch complementing an ultramarine sky. Every part of the Forest has its unique contribution to the fall scene -- the aspen bordered bottom lands of the Eureka-Fortine area, the larch covered flanks of the Yaak River Valleys, the late beargrass blooms of the Cabinet Mountains high country, the clumps of yellowed willow in the Clark Fork canyons.

The willow, ceanothus, pachisterra, and other browse plants common to the Clark Fork area, especially the west side, make it one of the more productive areas on the Forest for elk; a prize to many hunters. The same difficult terrain and dense brush that produces security and feed for both elk and deer means long tiring days to the hunter who leaves the road.

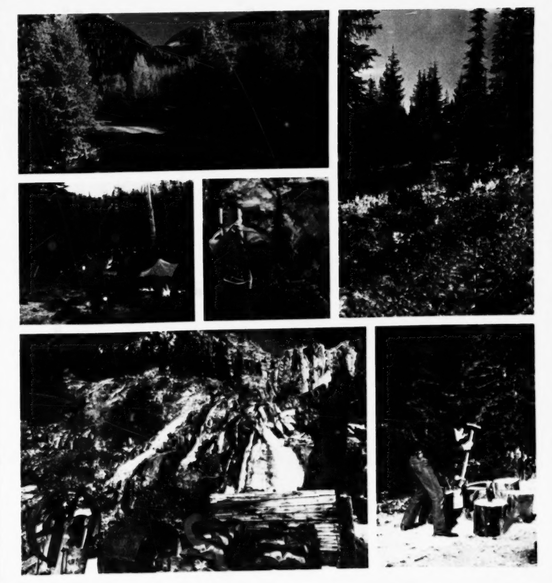
The Fisher River and Wolf Creek drainages are also popular big game hunting areas, although all corners of the Forest produce game for the lucky hunter.

The Kootenai River, a few of the slow moving streams, and several lakes offer quality waterfowl hunting on the Forest, especially after the northern flights have come down from Canadian grain fields. Those who don't hunt find that fishing the river on warm fall days can be very productive, if a little cold on the fingers.

To stay warm and save on high fuel costs, many people living in the Kootenai's valleys heat their homes with wood. Gathering the necessary wood is an important activity to these folks, and has become a form of recreation to most. An outing should begin with information from the Ranger District for ideas on where to go and how to get there. Western larch and Douglas-fir are the dead trees usually sought, although bug-killed lodgepole also makes good firewood, and is easier to get to in many areas. Old burns with their remaining snags are also sources for wood. Remember that any tree with nest holes or evidence of feeding should be left for the wildlife that need it to survive.

With cool nights designed for campfires and bug free days, fall is a good time for camping on the Forest. Even the most popular campsites have space to spare, including picnic areas like that at the Ross Creek Scenic Cedar Grove. If you're lucky, you may see a snowshoe rabbit in the grove, turned an obvious white before the ground is matching.

Finally, as the days are noticeably shorter and the last garden vines turned black by frost, the memorable sight of snow on the peaks signals the end of another season.



WINTER

Usually just before Thanksgiving the occasional snows of late fall begin to stay on the ground, not just in the high country, but in the valleys too.

The majority of Forest precipitation falls in the form of this snow. In recent years more people living near the National Forest have learned to appreciate these deep snows, and winter no longer constrains outdoor activities.

There always were a few hardy sorts who snowshoed their traplines or hunted mountain lion, but the snowmobile is probably what brought out many of today's winter recreationists. With its many miles of unplowed roads, the Kootenai offers the snowmobiler all the ingredients for memorable outings; lots of snow, roads to vantage points with broad panoramas, and moderate winter temperatures.

Even more recent in popularity on ths Forest, cross-country skiing is becoming an important form of recreation. Although somewhat more limited by access and distance than snowmobilers, ski tourers enjoy the fact that their necessary ingredients are often as close as their back door, and those same unplowed roads plus many trails offer excellent skiing. Some of the more scenic routes include the Ten Lakes Scenic Area, the Ross Creek Cedars, Northwest Peaks Area, the East Fork of Pipe Creek, and many areas in and adjacent to the Cabinet Mountains. Of course, extra care is necessary in Forest winter travel, especially where long distances or avalanche-prone slopes are involved.

The Kootenai abounds with Christmas trees growing wild across the Forest. You may cut one for your household and help the Forest at the same time if you thin one from a thick stand. Cutting more than one may require a permit from the District Ranger Office responsible for the area. Be sure to check first.